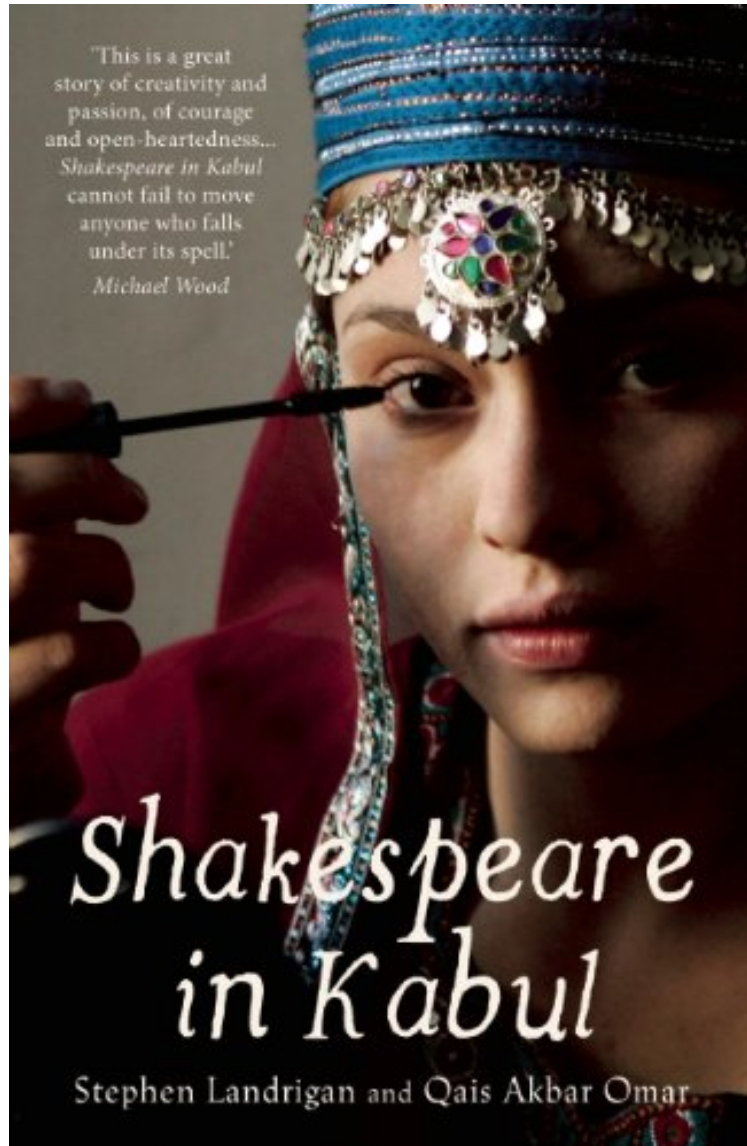


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Shakespeare in Kabul

Stephen Landrigan, Qais Akbar Omar
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Stephen Landrigan, Qais Akbar Omar : Shakespeare in Kabul before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Shakespeare in Kabul:

14 of 14 people found the following review helpful. A Gem of a BookBy Jerrold I. Keilson"Shakespeare in Kabul" is that rare book, an unexpected gem of a story. It tells the story of a group of international aid workers based in Afghanistan who see an opportunity to stage a Shakespeare play in Kabul, to make the point that Afghanistan had changed, and to bring great art and culture to the country. The authors, who were involved in the production to

differing degrees, tell the story of how they worked with Afghan actors, international non-governmental organizations and the Afghan government to get the play staged. However, like a gemstone, each time you turn the story you see another startling facet. "Shakespeare in Kabul" is first of all a recitation of how a director located actors, revised Love's Labours Lost to make it relevant to Afghanistan and put it into Dari, rehearsed, staged and put on the play in several venues in 2005 and 2006. It's also a story of resilience, of how Afghans survived thirty years of war and about the scars they bear. It's a story of how culture transcends boundaries, how the language of Shakespeare works as well in Afghanistan as in England. And it's a story of how culture can break boundaries, since the play marks the first time in a generation that men and women appeared on the same stage in Afghanistan, and that men and women sat together in an audience to see a play. The authors, Stephen Landrigan (a development worker and playwright) and Qais Omar (journalist) alternate writing sections. Their voices are unique and distinct, and lend their own dynamic tension to the narrative. All in all, this is a book worth reading.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Storytelling At Its Best
By earth song I haven't been "in touch", with Shakespeare since my schooldays[50 +] and what I knew about Afghanistan was bombs, burqas and war [think-CNN]. Now, Thanks to Stephen Landrigan and Qais Akbar Omar's spirited gift of story, we are given a feeling of being right there. For me the beauty of this book was the many people I "met" and how each one was needed to bring this play into being. The wholeness of history, culture, poetry, landscape, and most of all the beauty of the Afghan people, their steadfast loyalty to each other, good humor in rough times, their unbroken spirits, the courage to share their sorrows, and an amazing ability to create just what was needed for this play to work. I'm blessed I 'met' them and I think you will be too. Make yourself a cup of tea, take a deep breath-open your mind-open your heart and give yourself this gift of story.

10 of 11 people found the following review helpful. A Triumph!
By Janie828 "Shakespeare in Kabul" is a full-on TRIUMPH!! Brilliant! Poignant! Tender! Inspired! at times amusing.... gut-wrenching... heart-warming ... a rare intimate view! What a gift to share this wonderful story! It is masterful! It brings you right to the heart of war-ravaged Afghanistan and draws you in to experience the daily rhythms, successes, set-backs and achievements of this courageous troupe of determined thespians and writers. The characters, representing widely differing cultures and speaking different languages, work together and find their way through their own comedic and tragic scenes and through moments of intense frustration; mystified, and sometimes entertained by their intrinsic differences. "Shakespeare in Kabul" allows you to savor and share their personal journeys as politics and power struggles continue to explode around them. This book is rich in its insight and its poetry... and in all it exposes of the humanity, the cruelty, the courage, the inventiveness, the wisdom, the determination, the color, the dust, the repression and the compassion of the characters and cultures it portrays.... a play.... within a play... within a play. Brilliant!

In 2005, a group of actors in Kabul performed Shakespeare's Love's Labour's Lost to the cheers of Afghan audiences and rave reviews from foreign journalists. For the first time in years, men and women had appeared on stage together. The future held no limits, the actors believed. In this fast-moving, fondly told, and frequently very funny account, Qais Akbar Omar and Stephen Landrigan capture the triumphs and foibles of the actors as they extend their Afghan passion for poetry to Shakespeare's. Both authors were part of the production. Qais, a journalist, served as assistant director and interpreter for Parisian actress, Corinne Jaber, who had come to Afghanistan on holiday and returned to direct the play. Stephen, himself a playwright, assembled a team of Afghan translators to fashion a script in Dari as poetic as Shakespeare's. This chronicle of optimism plays out against the heartbreak of knowing that things in Afghanistan have not turned out the way the actors expected. Yet. Stephen Landrigan is a former journalist who has reported for The Washington Post and BBC Radio, among others. He went to Afghanistan in 2004 and now lives in Massachusetts where he works with the School of Leadership, Afghanistan (SOLA) that prepares young Afghan women to study at major American universities. During the Taliban era Qais Akbar Omar ran a carpet factory in his home, providing employment for forty young women. He is the author of A Fort of Nine Towers.

About the Author Qais Akbar Omar lives in Boston and is the author of A Fort of Nine Towers (FSG, 2013). Stephen Landrigan is a playwright, he lives in Boston and returns to Kabul often.